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News Release

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Indiana woman pleads guilty to filing false claims

A 36-year-old woman pleaded guilty today in federal court to six counts of false claims against the United States and one count of aggravated identity theft.

Paulina Alice Mohn, Gary, Ind., entered her plea Sept. 10 in Minneapolis before United States District Court Judge John Tunheim. Mohn was indicted Feb. 20.

According to Mohn's plea agreement, from Jan. 1, 2006, through May 2007, she worked as a branch manager and tax preparer for an H&R Block Tax Office located in a Wal-Mart store in Brooklyn Park. For tax years 2005 and 2006, Mohn prepared approximately 280 federal individual income tax returns on behalf of others, and at least 125 of them were fraudulent and contained false claims for refund. In addition, Mohn prepared and filed at least 115 false State of Minnesota income tax returns containing at least \$149,000 in false state claims for refund.

Mohn perpetrated the fraud scheme, the plea agreement states, by using fraudulent W-2 Forms containing false statements of income and tax withholding and by adding fictitious dependents to the taxpayer's return, both of which falsely inflated the claimed refund. All of the federal and state returns were electronically filed.

In addition, Mohn admitted that she did knowingly use without lawful authority the identification of another person on five separate occasions between March 2, 2006, and Feb. 2, 2007 in connection with the filing of tax returns. In each instance, a victim's name and Social Security Number were used to commit wire fraud.

Mohn faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison on each false claims count. She also faces a mandatory consecutive sentence for conviction on the aggravated identity theft count. Judge Tunheim will determine Mohn's sentence at a future date.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division and the Minnesota Department of Revenue, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy C. Rank.